(b) As reported by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NAB ARD), 4929 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were linked with banks in Gujarat as on 31 March, 2001.

(c) Approximately 84,000 families have benefited from the aforesaid programme.

(d) As on 31 March 2001, NAB ARD had provided Rs. S69.03 lakhs as cumulative refinance to the SHGs in Gujarat. In turn commercial banks had provided Rs. 639.11 lakhs as cumulative bank loan to these SHGs till 31.3.2001.

Stoppage of loans to Agricultural banks in Maharashtra by NABARD

2512. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NABARD has stopped giving loans to agricultural banks in Maharashtra due to refusal of guarantee to NABARD for such loan by Maharashtra Government;

(b) whether Government are aware that because of this, agricultural bank is about to be closed;

(c) whether it is also a fact that rich farmers are taking outstanding loans from these banks and poor farmers are affected by this;

(d) whether Government are taking any steps to recover loans from such rich farmers; and

(e) if so, the details of the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has reported that it has not stopped refinance to the banks in the State of Maharashtra for want of guarantee from State Government. However, NABARD had to withhold refinance assistance temporarily to Maharashtra State Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Bank (MSCARDB) as the bank had been defaulting to it towards payment of interest and repayment of principal. Despite this, the refinance avail men t in the State has not suffered as an increased allocation was provided to other banking institutions in the State.

(b) It has been reported by Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Maharashtra that no such decision has been taken by the Government of Maharashtra.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Recovery of loans is an on-going process and the concerned bank has already taken steps to recover its loans from all its borrowers. NAB ARD has reported that MSCARDB is taking action against the influential and big defaulters on priority basis.

Smuggling of Antique idols

2513. SHRIRAJUPARMAR:
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Antique idol smugglers caught" appearing on 23rd May, 2001 in the Hindustan Times, New Delhi;

(b) if so, what is the value of rare idols stolen from various temples;

(c) whether Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has registered cases in the matter;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to protect the rare and historical idols from being smuggled out?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Idols stolen from various temples have not been evaluated.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. On the basis of specific information, 3 idols were recovered by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) from a hotel in Man gal ore on 1.2.2000. As per the opinion of Archaeological Survey of India, these objects viz. Bronze of Vishnu (63x24x20 cm.), Bronze of Sri Devi (55x20x 18) and Bronze of Bhudevi (65.5x18.5x17.5), are the Utsava Murthys belonging to a Vaishnava temple and are assignable to Circa 18th Century A.D. The matter was subsequently referred to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and after preliminary enquiry a regular case was registered on 12.2.2001 under the provisions of Indian Penal Code. During investigation by CBI, two persons have been arrested from Bangalore and Mangalore in Karnataka State. It further came to light that the recovered idols have been stolen from a temple in Nellore,